announced in September, 1994—copy of which is available in the Library of Parliament.

These measures have resulted in removal of artificial impediments in the growth of the pharmaceutical industry and have created awareness with regard to the importance of R&D in this sector.

Safi River

3723. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Pollution Board has not been able to check the alarming rise in the percentage level of arsenic and mercury in the Safi River in Bihar;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to check the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ). (a) As per information made available from Bihar State Pollution Control Board, arsenic and mercury pollution in Safi River were within permissible limits.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Legislation on Bio Diversity

3724. SHRI ANANT GUDHE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news report captioned "No consensus on tackling genetic smuggling" appearing in the 'Indian Express', dated February 28, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken on the issues raised therein; and

(d) the steps taken during the last four years to bring out comprehensive legislation on safeguarding the bio diversity of the country and present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The said news report deals with the subject of regulating access to biological resources of the country. Soon after India ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in February 1994 and became a Party to the Convention, the Ministry of Environment and Forests initiated steps to design a comprehensive legislation on biodiversity. One of the main objectives of this legislation would be to regulate access to biological resources of the country. Biodiversity being a wide subject, consultations with various stake holders, related departments and Ministries, State Governments, experts, etc., were required, and initiated. Analysis and examination of all existing regulations having any linkage with biodiversity was also required and has now been done. Taking note of the time required to complete this exercise, the Ministry of Environment and Forests simultaneously worked on developing an interim measure to regulate export of biological resources of India under the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act 1992. This exercise was done through an inter-ministerial Group which also had NGOs and experts as its members. The draft Public Notice made by this Group has finally not been found suitable because of its implications for trade and difficulties in its implementation. Following inter-ministerial consultations on the subject in January 1997, the work on a comprehensive legislation has been speeded up.

Crimes on National Highway

3725. SHRI MANGAL RAM PREMI :
SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether robberies and kidnappings on the Delhi-Rishikesh national highway has increased during the last one year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of persons arrested in this connection; and

(d) the measures taken or proposed to be taken to check robberies and kidnappings on the highway ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Hunger Free Nation

3726. SHRI K. PRADHANI :
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have a proposal to make the nation hunger free;

(b) if so, the strategy adopted and the target date fixed for the purpose;

(c) the fund provision made in this connection for 1997-98;